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Chapter I
Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention

B. Matters brought to the attention of the Council

Recommendations of the Permanent Forum
Self-harm and suicide among children and young people

1. Indigenous peoples worldwide continue to suffer from the intergenerational trauma of colonization, assimilation, language and culture loss and the disintegration of families. Collectively, those problems can be referred to as a lack of self-determination. Such trauma can lead to desperation and hopelessness, with indigenous communities frequently seeing suicide rates that are significantly higher than among the general population. This global challenge affects indigenous peoples in all regions.

2. The Permanent Forum welcomes information received from States and indigenous peoples on current initiatives and strategies to tackle self-harm and suicide among indigenous children and young people at the national level, as well as on international efforts in the Arctic and Latin America. It is, however, concerned by the lack of action and coordination in taking on the issue at the global level. That the Forum received no information from United Nations entities on global initiatives in this regard leads it to conclude that the issue is not a priority for the United Nations system.

3. The Permanent Forum therefore urges the World Health Organization to develop a strategy and/or programme to tackle self-harm and suicide among indigenous children and young people at the global level. As a first step, the Forum suggests that the World Health Organization gather evidence and research on the prevalence of self-harm and suicide among indigenous children and young people

and prepare a compilation of good practice on prevention, publishing its findings by 1 January 2017.

4. The Permanent Forum recalls its repeated recommendations to the United Nations system in which it called for studies and dedicated workshops on suicide among indigenous children and young people and notes with increasing concern that the system has not adequately responded to the recommendations and that no interventions were made on the issue by any United Nations agency.

5. The Permanent Forum urges States to recognize that suicidal behaviour, suicide and self-harm are directly related to the social and economic situation of indigenous peoples in specific countries and primarily linked to loss of self-identification and departure from the roots of traditional culture and ways of life. This, in turn, is linked to the loss by indigenous peoples of their rights to their lands and territories, natural resources, traditional ways of life and traditional uses of natural resources.

6. The Permanent Forum recommends that the United Nations Children's Fund immediately develop and adopt a comprehensive and distinct policy on indigenous children and young people, taking into account the human rights affirmed in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and in consultation and collaboration with indigenous peoples and indigenous children and youth organizations in particular.

7. The Permanent Forum:

(a) Urges all States to develop national programmes to study the issue and to prevent suicidal behaviour, suicide and self-harm among indigenous children and young people;

(b) Calls upon the Secretary-General to consider appointing a special rapporteur on indigenous children and youth issues in order to prevent suicidal behaviour, suicide and self-harm among indigenous children and young people;

(c) Recommends that United Nations bodies and agencies, among others, develop a system-wide plan for the prevention of suicide and self-harm among indigenous children and young people.

8. The Permanent Forum urges all States to substantially increase the human and financial resources made available to all indigenous communities and schools for prevention and holistic treatment based on cultural, spiritual and linguistic revitalization, providing healthy and positive lifestyle choices and access to traditional methods of counselling based on accurate and reliable data. Furthermore, it is important to promote positive campaigns and experiences that focus on the beauty and uniqueness of indigenous identities and counter the romanticized view of suicide and self-harm.